

**TOWN OF ABINGDON
WORK SESSION MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2011 – 7:00 P.M.
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM - MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A work session meeting of the Abingdon Town Council was held on Thursday, January 27, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the downstairs meeting room of the Municipal Building.

A. Welcome

B. Roll Call

Members of Council Present:	Edward B. Morgan, Mayor Mrs. Cathy Lowe, Vice Mayor Mr. Jason N. Berry Mr. Richard E. Humphreys Mr. Robert M. Howard
Administrative/Town Staff:	Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Town Clerk Deborah Icenhour, Town Attorney Jim Smith, Dir. Of Wastewater Operations/Town Eng. Garrett Jackson, Dir. Of Planning Jim Cowart, Dir. of Econ. Dev/Grants Writer John Dew, Dir. Of Public Services/Construction Myra Cook, Dir. of Tourism Tenille Montgomery, Administrative Assistant Tonya Triplett, Tourism Sales Manager James Agner, Events Coordinator Floyd Bailey, Dir. of Information Services Rob Case, Network Administrator Daniel Kidd, Systems Administrator
Visitors:	None

C. Presentation of Economic Development Strategic Plan

Jim Cowart, Director of Economic Development provided a power point presentation setting forth his vision and strategic plans for the town's economic development department. Mr. Cowart presented ideas for economic gardening, conference hotel, mid-town hub, arts incubator, hospitality zone, 3/50 merchant project, soapbox derby and Civil War Committee. Council members commented on the need for a property committee and inquired about the development of the property in and around the Preston Street area.

D. Presentation of Town Website and social networking sites *Facebook* and *Twitter*

Tenille Montgomery, Administrative Assistant and Tonya Triplett, Tourism Sales Manager provided a presentation on the town's Tourism website which is now located at www.abingdon.com. Ms. Montgomery showed the Council the town's *Facebook* page and *Twitter* site which she is updating on a daily basis to keep citizens informed about events happening in and around town as well information about town meetings, open job positions, and scheduling notices. Council members commented on the need for a comprehensive event calendar for trip planning and a picture of the Visitors Center.

E. Update on the 2011 Music Events Schedule

James Agner, Events Coordinator provided a power point presentation detailing the town's music event schedule for 2011. Mr. Agner also provided a calendar with a listing of all events that his team will be providing set-up for on a monthly basis throughout the town.

F. Presentation of website enhancement by Department of Information Technology

Floyd Bailey, Dir. of Information Technology and Rob Case, Network Administrator provided a demonstration of the newly enhanced governmental town website which is now located at www.abingdon-va.gov. Mr. Bailey pointed out information about new email addresses for council and town staff and changes that had been made to the website to make it more user friendly. Mr. Bailey also commented on the Abingdon Alerts/Ask Abingdon system that is now being used to provide citizens with emergency notifications.

G. Discussion of staffing at the Heartwood Artisan Center

Mr. Kelly, Town Manager commented that he had met with Todd Christensen, Director for the Heartwood Artisan Center and it appeared that the opening of the Center would be later than expected due to construction delays. Mr. Kelly noted that he would keep the Council informed about the staffing personnel the town would assign to Heartwood closer to the opening date.

H. Discussion of Tourism vision statement update, previously presented by Myra Cook, Dir. of Tourism on November 1, 2010.

Mrs. Lowe inquired about the events that Ms. Cook was planning for 2011. Ms. Cook indicated that she was planning an "Art in the Yard" event, a bicycle event on the Creeper Trail and a fishing event. Ms. Cook commented on the "Fish Virginia First" campaign that the State Tourism office has launched for 2011.

I. Council Member Inquiries

- Mrs. Lowe inquired about the Follow Your Heart to Virginia sweepstakes. Ms. Triplett commented that she had worked with several businesses in Abingdon and had received several donations that would go toward the sweepstakes.
- Mrs. Lowe inquired about the by-laws for the Tourism Advisory Committee and need for discussion with regard to the representatives on the Committee.
- Mr. Humphreys provided information about plans for the Visitor Center at the The Muster Grounds property and updated the Council on upcoming events scheduled for 2011.
- Mayor Morgan provided information about tourism efforts in Floyd County, Virginia where he recently visited and commented about the quality of music and arts they are promoting in their downtown area.

There being no further comments, Mayor Morgan declared the meeting adjourned.

Edward B. Morgan, Mayor

Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Town Clerk